



CLEP[®]

Official Study Guide

16th Edition

Introductory Psychology

College-Level Examination Program[®]

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Introductory Psychology

Description of the Examination

The Introductory Psychology examination covers material that is usually taught in a one-semester undergraduate course in introductory psychology. It stresses basic facts, concepts, and generally accepted principles in the 13 areas listed in the following section.

The examination contains 95 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the Introductory Psychology examination require candidates to demonstrate the following abilities:

- Knowledge of terminology, principles, and theory
- Ability to comprehend, evaluate, and analyze problem situations
- Ability to apply knowledge to new situations

The subject matter of the Introductory Psychology examination is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the main topics indicate the approximate percentages of exam questions on those topics.

8–9% History, approaches, methods

History of psychology
Approaches: biological, behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic
Research methods: experimental, clinical, correlational
Ethics in research

8–9% Biological bases of behavior

Etiology
Endocrine system
Functional organization of the nervous system
Genetics
Neuroanatomy
Physiological techniques

7–8% Sensation and perception

Attention
Other senses: somesthesia, olfaction, gustation, vestibular system
Perceptual development
Perceptual processes
Receptor processes: vision, audition
Sensory mechanisms: thresholds, adaptation

5–6% States of consciousness

Hypnosis and meditation
Psychoactive drug effects
Sleep and dreaming

10–11% Learning

Biological bases
Classical conditioning
Cognitive process in learning
Observational learning
Operant conditioning

8–9% Cognition

Intelligence and creativity
Language
Memory
Thinking and problem solving

7–8% Motivation and emotion

Biological bases
Hunger, thirst, sex, pain
Social motivation
Theories of emotion
Theories of motivation

8–9% Developmental psychology

Dimensions of development: physical, cognitive, social, moral
 Gender identity and sex roles
 Heredity-environment issues
 Research methods: longitudinal, cross-sectional
 Theories of development

7–8% Personality

Assessment techniques
 Growth and adjustment
 Personality theories and approaches
 Research methods: idiographic, nomothetic
 Self-concept, self-esteem

8–9% Psychological disorders and health

Affective disorders
 Anxiety disorders
 Dissociative disorders
 Health, stress, and coping
 Personality disorders
 Psychoses
 Somatoform disorders
 Theories of psychopathology

7–8% Treatment of psychological disorders

Behavioral therapies
 Biological and drug therapies
 Cognitive therapies
 Community and preventive approaches
 Insight therapies: psychodynamic and humanistic approaches

7–8% Social psychology

Aggression/antisocial behavior
 Attitudes and attitude change
 Attribution processes
 Conformity, compliance, obedience
 Group dynamics
 Interpersonal perception

3–4% Statistics, test, and measurement

Descriptive statistics
 Inferential statistics
 Measurement of intelligence
 Mental handicapping conditions
 Reliability and validity
 Samples, populations, norms
 Types of tests

Sample Test Questions

The following questions are provided to give an indication of the types of questions that appear on the Introductory Psychology examination. CLEP examinations are designed so that average students completing a course in the subject can usually answer about half the questions correctly.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. "The focus of psychological science is the attempt to relate overt responses to observable environmental stimuli."

This statement is most closely associated with which of the following approaches?

(A) Cognitive
(B) Behavioral
(C) Biological
(D) Humanistic
(E) Psychodynamic
2. Which of the following types of research design is most appropriate for establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between two variables?

(A) Between subjects
(B) Within subjects
(C) Quantitative
(D) Experimental
(E) Naturalistic
3. The science of psychology is typically dated from the establishment of the late-nineteenth-century Leipzig laboratory of

(A) Hermann Ebbinghaus
(B) Hermann Helmholtz
(C) William James
(D) Wilhelm Wundt
(E) John Locke
4. Which of the following control procedures would be most appropriate in evaluating the behavioral change produced by a drug?

(A) Counterbalancing
(B) Matched groups
(C) Stratification
(D) Representative sampling
(E) Placebo
5. The statement "response latency is the number of seconds that elapses between the stimulus and the response" is an example of

(A) introspection
(B) a description of interaction
(C) a deduction
(D) an operational definition
(E) free association
6. The release of a neurotransmitter into the synaptic cleft is caused by which of the following?

(A) An extended refractory period
(B) An action potential
(C) Reuptake of the neurotransmitter
(D) Binding of the neurotransmitter to a post-synaptic cell membrane
(E) Vesicles migrating into the synaptic cleft
7. A neuron is said to be polarized when

(A) it is in the refractory period
(B) it is in a resting state
(C) it is about to undergo an action potential
(D) the synaptic terminals release chemicals into the synaptic gap
(E) chemicals outside the cell body cross the cell membrane

8. Down syndrome is caused by
 - (A) an extra chromosome
 - (B) an imbalance of neurotransmitters
 - (C) a tumor in the parietal lobe
 - (D) a nutritional deficiency
 - (E) a viral infection in the third trimester of pregnancy
9. How many pairs of chromosomes are contained in most human cells?
 - (A) 7
 - (B) 10
 - (C) 16
 - (D) 23
 - (E) 31
10. Damage to an individual's parietal lobes would most likely result in
 - (A) a heightened sense of smell
 - (B) a reduced sensitivity to touch
 - (C) decreased reaction time
 - (D) a loss in the ability to understand language
 - (E) a difficulty with visual discrimination
11. In adults, total sensory deprivation for long periods of time produces
 - (A) a feeling of well-being similar to that achieved through meditation
 - (B) no change in emotions or cognition, provided the participant was mentally stable before the deprivation
 - (C) increased efficiency in the senses of sight, hearing, and touch
 - (D) profound apathy and a subjective sensation of powerlessness
 - (E) hallucinations and impaired efficiency in all areas of intellectual functioning
12. Which of the following statements does NOT accurately describe the retina?
 - (A) The rods are more dense in the fovea than in the periphery.
 - (B) The blind spot is closer to the fovea than to the edge of the retina.
 - (C) The image on the retina is upside down.
 - (D) The image is located at the back of the eye.
 - (E) The eye contains two kinds of receptors: rods and cones.
13. The opponent-process theory in vision best explains which of the following?
 - (A) Size constancy
 - (B) Color afterimages
 - (C) Superior visual acuity in the fovea
 - (D) Depth perception using monocular cues
 - (E) Illusory movement
14. The receptors for hearing are the
 - (A) ossicles in the middle ear
 - (B) otoliths in the semicircular canals
 - (C) hair cells on the basilar membrane
 - (D) specialized cells on the tympanic membrane
 - (E) cells in the lining of the auditory canal



15. The picture above of a road receding in the distance represents the depth perception cue known as
 - (A) accommodation
 - (B) retinal disparity
 - (C) texture gradient
 - (D) relative size
 - (E) linear perspective

16. Brain waves during REM sleep generally appear as
 - (A) alternating high- and low-amplitude waves
 - (B) rapid low-amplitude waves
 - (C) irregular medium-amplitude waves
 - (D) slow low-amplitude waves
 - (E) slow high-amplitude waves
17. Which of the following is a type of sleep pattern that becomes less prevalent as one moves from infancy to adulthood?
 - (A) Alpha
 - (B) Beta
 - (C) Gamma
 - (D) Theta
 - (E) REM
18. According to current psychological research, hypnosis is most useful for which of the following purposes?
 - (A) Pain control
 - (B) Age regression
 - (C) Treatment of psychotic behavior
 - (D) Treatment of a memory disorder
 - (E) Treatment of a personality disorder
19. Checking the coin return every time one passes a pay telephone or a vending machine is a type of behavior probably being maintained by which of the following schedules of reinforcement?
 - (A) Fixed interval only
 - (B) Fixed ratio only
 - (C) Variable ratio only
 - (D) Variable interval and fixed ratio
 - (E) Fixed interval and variable ratio
20. Making the amount of time a child can spend playing video games contingent on the amount of time the child spends practicing the piano is an illustration of
 - (A) Bentham's adaptive hedonism principle
 - (B) Locke's law of association
 - (C) aversive conditioning
 - (D) classical conditioning
 - (E) operant conditioning
21. Which of the following strategies would undermine the effectiveness of punishment?
 - (A) Delaying punishment
 - (B) Using punishment just severe enough to be effective
 - (C) Making punishment consistent
 - (D) Explaining punishment
 - (E) Minimizing dependence on physical punishment
22. A teacher tells a child to sit down in class. Over the course of several days, the child is standing up more and more frequently, only to be told to sit down each time. It is most likely that the teacher's reprimands are serving as
 - (A) a punishment
 - (B) approval
 - (C) a reinforcer
 - (D) an aversive stimulus
 - (E) a conditioned stimulus
23. Which of the following is a secondary reinforcer?
 - (A) Food
 - (B) Warmth
 - (C) Water
 - (D) Money
 - (E) Sex

24. Shortly after learning to associate the word “dog” with certain four-legged furry animals, young children will frequently misidentify a cow or a horse as a dog. This phenomenon is best viewed as an example of
- (A) differentiation
 - (B) negative transfer
 - (C) imprinting
 - (D) stimulus generalization
 - (E) linear perspective
25. If on the last day of a psychology class, a student is asked to remember what was done in class each day during the term, she will likely be able to remember best the activities of the first and last class meetings. This situation is an example of
- (A) retroactive interference
 - (B) positive transfer
 - (C) the serial position effect
 - (D) proactive interference
 - (E) short-term memory
26. Proactive interference describes a process by which
- (A) people remember digits better than words
 - (B) people remember images better than words
 - (C) people remember elements in pairs
 - (D) prior learning interferes with subsequent learning
 - (E) subsequent learning interferes with prior learning
27. Research has shown that students generally perform better if tested in the same room where they did their learning. This shows the importance of which of the following in memory?
- (A) Insight
 - (B) Preparedness
 - (C) Context
 - (D) Invariance
 - (E) Rehearsal
28. Which of the following is true of recall performance on a typical forgetting curve?
- (A) It decreases rapidly at first and then it levels off.
 - (B) It decreases slowly at first and then it drops off quite sharply.
 - (C) It decreases at a steady rate until it reaches a near-zero level.
 - (D) It remains steady for about the first week and then it begins a gradual decline.
 - (E) It increases for the first few hours after learning and then it decreases very slowly over the next few weeks.
29. According to information processing theory, information is progressively processed by
- (A) long-term memory, short-term memory, and then sensory memory
 - (B) sensory memory, short-term memory, and then long-term memory
 - (C) sensory memory, semantic memory, and then long-term memory
 - (D) short-term memory, semantic memory, and then long-term memory
 - (E) short-term memory, long-term memory, and then sensory memory
30. One theory of the effects of arousal holds that efficiency of behavior can be described as an inverted U-shaped function of increasing arousal. Which of the following accurately describes this relationship?
- (A) Greater arousal leads to better performance.
 - (B) Greater arousal leads to poorer performance.
 - (C) Low and high levels of arousal lead to poorest performance.
 - (D) Overarousal leads to performance efficiency.
 - (E) Underarousal leads to performance efficiency.

31. Which of the following presents a pair of needs from Abraham Maslow's hierarchical need structure in order from lower to higher need?

(A) Belongingness, safety
(B) Self-actualization, physiological needs
(C) Physiological needs, safety
(D) Esteem, belongingness
(E) Self-actualization, esteem
32. In an approach-avoidance conflict, as the person nears the goal, the levels of attraction and aversion change in which of the following ways?

(A) Both increase
(B) Both decrease
(C) Attraction increases and aversion decreases
(D) Attraction decreases and aversion increases
(E) Both are extinguished
33. Which of the following has been identified as correlating most closely with heart disease?

(A) Anxiety
(B) Physical overexertion
(C) Guilt
(D) Muscle tension
(E) Hostility
34. In which of the following areas does psychological research show most clearly that girls develop earlier than boys?

(A) Independence from parents
(B) Athletic competence
(C) Intellectual achievement
(D) Adolescent physical growth spurt
(E) Self-actualization
35. Developmental psychologists would most likely prefer longitudinal research designs to cross-sectional research designs because longitudinal designs

(A) usually yield results much more quickly
(B) offer the advantage of between-subjects comparisons
(C) are much less likely to be influenced by cultural changes that occur over time
(D) utilize the subjects as their own experimental controls
(E) are more valid
36. A young child breaks her cookie into a number of pieces and asserts that "now there is more to eat." In Piaget's analysis, the child's behavior is evidence of

(A) formal logical operations
(B) concrete logical operations
(C) conservation
(D) preoperational thought
(E) sensorimotor analysis
37. A school psychologist informs a ninth-grade teacher that Jimmy "identifies" with his twelfth-grade brother. What the psychologist means is that Jimmy tends to

(A) feel inferior to his brother
(B) envy and to be jealous of his brother
(C) influence the way his brother views the world
(D) recognize similarities between his brother and himself
(E) accept his brother's values and imitate his behavior

38. According to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, what is the correct order of the stages for confronting impending death?
- (A) Anger, denial, bargaining, depression, acceptance
 - (B) Bargaining, anger, depression, denial, acceptance
 - (C) Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance
 - (D) Depression, anger, denial, bargaining, acceptance
 - (E) Depression, denial, anger, bargaining, acceptance
39. When insulted by a friend, Sally's first impulse was to strike him. Instead, she yelled loudly and kicked a door several times. This means of reducing aggressive impulses exemplifies which of the following?
- (A) Repression
 - (B) Abreaction
 - (C) Displacement
 - (D) Cathexis
 - (E) Sublimation
40. Carl Jung is associated with which of the following concepts?
- (A) Inferiority complex
 - (B) Need for achievement
 - (C) Collective unconscious
 - (D) Self-esteem
 - (E) Self-actualization
41. Erikson's and Freud's theories of personality development are most similar in that they both
- (A) emphasize the libido
 - (B) focus on adult development
 - (C) discount the importance of culture
 - (D) are based on stages
 - (E) view behavior as a continuum
42. Lawrence is pessimistic, rigid, and moody. In terms of Hans Eysenck's personality dimensions, Lawrence would be classified as
- (A) independent-dependent
 - (B) stable-extraverted
 - (C) internal-external
 - (D) unstable-introverted
 - (E) passive-aggressive
43. The key distinction between a personality trait and an attitude is
- (A) centrality
 - (B) salience
 - (C) durability
 - (D) direction
 - (E) valence
44. A diagnosis of schizophrenia typically includes which of the following symptoms?
- (A) Delusions
 - (B) Panic attacks
 - (C) Hypochondriasis
 - (D) Multiple personality
 - (E) Psychosexual dysfunction
45. The term "etiology" refers to the study of which of the following aspects of an illness?
- (A) Origins and causes
 - (B) Characteristic symptoms
 - (C) Expected outcome following treatment
 - (D) Frequency of occurrence
 - (E) Level of contagiousness
46. An obsession is defined as
- (A) a senseless ritual
 - (B) a hallucination
 - (C) a delusion
 - (D) an unwanted thought
 - (E) a panic attack

47. A somatization disorder is characterized chiefly by
- (A) changes in mood
 - (B) panic attacks
 - (C) agoraphobia
 - (D) changes in eating behavior
 - (E) physical complaints
48. Personality disorders are characterized by which of the following?
- (A) A fear of public places, frequently accompanied by panic attacks
 - (B) Inflexible and maladaptive responses to stress, and problematic social relationships
 - (C) A successful response to neuroleptic drugs
 - (D) A deficiency of acetylcholine in the brain
 - (E) An increased level of serotonin in the brain
49. Research on the effectiveness of psychotherapy has indicated that
- (A) there are therapeutic methods that have been shown to be especially effective for particular psychological disorders
 - (B) nondirective techniques are generally superior to directive ones
 - (C) the effectiveness of a method depends on the length of time a therapist was trained in the method
 - (D) psychoanalysis is the most effective technique for eliminating behavior disorders
 - (E) psychoanalysis is the most effective technique for curing anxiety disorders
50. Which of the following kinds of therapy attempts to correct irrational beliefs that lead to psychological distress?
- (A) Behavioral
 - (B) Cognitive
 - (C) Existential
 - (D) Gestalt
 - (E) Psychoanalytic
51. An individual undergoing psychotherapy shows improvement due only to that person's belief in the therapy and not because of the therapy itself. This result illustrates a
- (A) transference effect
 - (B) placebo effect
 - (C) cathartic effect
 - (D) primary gain
 - (E) conditioned response
52. Which of the following can be a significant side effect of electroconvulsive therapy?
- (A) Aphasia
 - (B) Sustained convulsions
 - (C) Muscle tremors
 - (D) Loss of muscle control
 - (E) Temporary loss of memory
53. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI's) are used primarily in the treatment of which of the following?
- (A) Anxiety
 - (B) Schizophrenia
 - (C) Depression
 - (D) Mania
 - (E) Sleep disorders
54. Similarity, proximity, and familiarity are important determinants of
- (A) observational learning
 - (B) friendship formation
 - (C) sexual orientation
 - (D) aggression
 - (E) imprinting

55. All of the following are true about altruism EXCEPT:
- (A) It is more common in small towns and rural areas than in cities.
 - (B) It is more likely to be inherited than is aggressive behavior.
 - (C) A person is more likely to perform an altruistic act when another person has modeled altruistic behavior.
 - (D) A person is more likely to perform an altruistic act when another person has pointed out the need.
 - (E) A person is more likely to be altruistic when not in a hurry.
56. The bystander effect has been explained by which of the following?
- (A) Empathy
 - (B) Diffusion of responsibility
 - (C) Social facilitation
 - (D) Reactive devaluation
 - (E) Defective schemas
57. According to Robert Sternberg, love is composed of which of the following?
- (A) Maturity, romance, liking
 - (B) Assimilation, accommodation, altruism
 - (C) Intimacy, passion, commitment
 - (D) Selflessness, agape, companionship
 - (E) Tolerance, humility, trust
58. Job satisfaction has an inverse relationship with
- (A) productivity
 - (B) career interest
 - (C) turnover
 - (D) age
 - (E) skill level
59. An attribution that focuses on an individual's ability or personality characteristics is described as
- (A) situational
 - (B) collectivist
 - (C) personal
 - (D) stereotypic
 - (E) homogeneous
60. Which of the following is a true statement about the relationship between test validity and test reliability?
- (A) A test can be reliable without being valid.
 - (B) A test that has high content validity will have high reliability.
 - (C) A test that has low content validity will have low reliability.
 - (D) The higher the test's validity, the lower its reliability will be.
 - (E) The validity of a test always exceeds its reliability.
61. Which of the following statistics indicates the distribution with the greatest variability?
- (A) A variance of 30.6
 - (B) A standard deviation of 11.2
 - (C) A range of 6
 - (D) A mean of 61.5
 - (E) A median of 38

Study Resources

Most textbooks used in college-level introductory psychology courses cover the topics in the outline given earlier, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphasis given to them may differ. To prepare for the Introductory Psychology exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found in most college bookstores. When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the “Knowledge and Skills Required” for this test.

You will find it helpful to supplement your reading with books listed in the bibliographies found in most psychology textbooks. The Internet is another resource you could explore.

Additional suggestions for preparing for CLEP exams are given in “Preparing to Take CLEP Examinations.”

Answer Key

1.	B	32.	A
2.	D	33.	E
3.	D	34.	D
4.	E	35.	D
5.	D	36.	D
6.	B	37.	E
7.	B	38.	C
8.	A	39.	C
9.	D	40.	C
10.	B	41.	D
11.	E	42.	D
12.	A	43.	C
13.	B	44.	A
14.	C	45.	A
15.	E	46.	D
16.	B	47.	E
17.	E	48.	B
18.	A	49.	A
19.	C	50.	B
20.	E	51.	B
21.	A	52.	E
22.	C	53.	C
23.	D	54.	B
24.	D	55.	B
25.	C	56.	B
26.	D	57.	C
27.	C	58.	C
28.	A	59.	C
29.	B	60.	A
30.	C	61.	B
31.	C		